

Cook County Advocate

2003 • Vol. 4

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

Cook Region scholars win at college

Families Now and Forever congratulates the Cook County graduates on the double accomplishment of attending college and receiving a DCFS Scholarship. These young people stood out in their schools and communities as examples of what hope and hard work can bring about. Right about now the reality of college life is probably sinking in for these students. There remains plenty of road ahead, but with perseverance and the help of dedicated caregivers, caseworkers and others they are on the right path.



Rodnisha Anderson

Rodnisha Anderson, 18, of Chicago, is a 2003 graduate of Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy. In addition to participating on the Math Team and Yearbook Committee, Rodnisha was President of both her senior class and Student Council. She is also Secretary of the National Foster Youth Advisory Council, which advocates for youth in foster care. She now attends Chicago State University.

Valerie Brewer

Valerie Brewer, of Chicago, graduated from South Shore Community Academy. She had a 4.5 G.P.A. on a 5.0 system and maintained a full schedule of honors classes throughout high school. She was a member of the National Honor Society, the volleyball team, and the Debate Team. Valerie ranked number one in her graduating class. She now attends the University of Illinois and is pursuing a major in either Accounting or Nursing.

Crystal Clemons

Crystal Clemons is a resident of San Bernardino, California. While attending Pacific High School, she was a member of the girl's basketball team, track and field, and cross-country teams. Crystal now attends Philander Smith College in Arkansas. She plans to become a physical therapist or physical education teacher.

LaTasha Coleman

LaTasha Coleman, 18, of Chicago, is a graduate of Kenwood High School where she was an officer in the Key Club, a member of the Concert Band, and a Big Sister to incoming freshmen. LaTasha now attends the University of Illinois and is still determining her major.



TyJuan Cratic

TyJuan Cratic, 18, of Chicago, is a graduate of De La Salle High School. While at De La Salle, TyJuan participated in Student Council, Spanish Club, Creative Writing Club, and Ski Club. He also worked on the school newspaper and yearbook and participated in the annual Mock Trial Competition. TyJuan attends Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and is majoring in Political Science. He has his sights set on a career in politics.

Shelly Hopper

Shelly Hopper, 18, of River Forest, first attended Triton Community College. She now attends Northern Illinois University. She received her CNA certificate from the State of Illinois and plans to get a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and work in a pediatric setting.



Cook County support groups learn tips to battle parenting stress



Rev. Janet Hibson helps parents “de-stress” at the Northeast Foster Parent Association’s appreciation lunch

Perhaps stress is something that parents just learn to accept and live with. But Cook County parents are tackling the problem head on and learning ways to beat stress. Both the Northeast Foster Parent Association and the Cook South Support Group meetings featured speakers on ways to spot and avoid the effects of stress.

There is a lot going on under the surface when a stressful situation arises. Within seconds of encountering a stressful situation, the adrenal glands kick in, sending adrenaline racing through the bloodstream. The arteries constrict, the heart beats faster, white blood cell production increases and red blood cells also increase. The muscles expand as the blood delivers more sugar for energy. Perspiration increases and oxygen intake increases. Just hearing a partial list of the body’s reaction to stress is enough to stress a person out.

Rev. Janet Hibson, director of pastoral care with Life Link, offered foster and adoptive parents lessons on how to deal with what often seems like a double-portion of stress. At the Northeast Foster Parent Association, heads nodded and hands shot up to contribute to the list of stressors that ranged from spouses to children to calls from teachers. The signs were easy to read: headaches, irritability, insomnia, forgetfulness, depression, indigestion and anger, to name just a few.

It can take up to 72 hours for the body to return to its normal state after a stressful period, said Rev. Hibson. Many foster parents did the math and realized that a call from the school twice a week could mean that they could never return to “normal.”

Dr. George Smith of the Management Planning Institute offered the Cook South group ideas on how to deal with the things that bring stress to avoid the negative emotional and health problems that can come if stress goes unchecked. Hopefully, the tips below will help minimize the damage.

Use these tools to chip away at stress:

- Exercise the stress away
- Pray or meditate
- Take a few minutes each day to relax
- Be cheerful
- Plan ahead
- Avoid abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Write or keep a journal to get the stress out onto paper
- Clip inspiring photos from magazines and keep pictures handy
- Look for the lesson to be learned from the stressful situation
- Realize that the problem is not always another person and can be within

Cook North Region responds to requests for local trainings

Cook North region established foster parent training teams at each of the Cook North sites. The response to the trainings from foster parents has been great so far. Previous topics have included Documentation and Record keeping, Educational Services, Asthma and Domestic Violence issues. Trainings are conducted by guest speakers, community agencies, or our own DCFS staff. These trainings occur monthly at each site and refreshments and training credit hours are provided. The offices will continue to work and revise the schedule to meet foster parents needs.

	Skokie Office 8100 McCormick Blvd. 1st Thursday of every month	Bradley Office 2500 W. Bradley Pl. Training Dates vary	Chicago 1911 S. Indiana 4th Friday of every month
November	To be arranged	Cultural Issues and Transracial Placement	Changes in Rule 402—Licensing Standards
December	Stress Management	Holidays and how they affect the emotional stability of youth in care	Stress Management
Contacts	Peggy Bosell 847-745-3012	Carolyn Griggs 773-866-5706	Dorothy Jarrett 773-328-2309

Please confirm participation in the training by contacting the people indicated above. Each team is looking to involve more foster parents in attending the training and in working with them to identify more topics of interest.

Cook South honors long-time support specialist and foster parents

The Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Luncheon was particularly special this year, as Cook South gave special recognition to Amelia Winfrey, a Foster Care Support Specialist, who retired after 15 years. Charles Bowden, Cook South's Resource Manager, presented Winfrey with a special plaque from Cook South to honor her along with the Cook South foster parents.

Lorne Garrett, the Acting Regional Administrator for Cook South, was also in attendance. Garrett thanked the foster parents for their dedicated service to children and families. The program included presentations and performances by many talented DCFS staff and foster parents. The guest speaker, Richard Baker, one of Cook South's

Educational Liaisons, spoke of his own personal journey through the foster care system as a child, and the positive influence and support he received from his foster parents.



Families from Cook South sit back and enjoy their Appreciation Luncheon.

Three Cook Central offices remain intact

Director Bryan Samuels decided to scrap previous plans to fold the Cook Central region and negotiated an agreement with the union to maintain staff.

“We need to keep offices open on Chicago’s West Side and in west suburban areas of Cook County, and keep experienced staff working with the families and communities they already know well,” said Samuels.

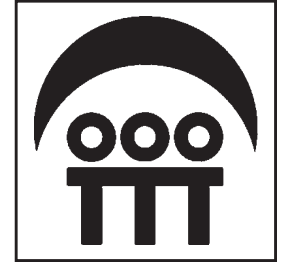
Shortly after taking the helm last April, Samuels asked union leaders to fast track realignment negotiations, which had already been underway for more than four months. His commitment focused on ensuring that all staff kept their jobs, that staff were housed in the communities they served, that DCFS kept a strong presence in the West Side and west suburban areas of Cook County, and that caseloads remained at or below levels set by legal agreements and national practice standards.



Cook Central Region's foster parents take the cake!

Cook Central youth can prepare for work with North Lawndale Employment Network

Building Beyond! is an intensive program that prepares young adults to enter the workforce and become successful, self-sufficient, and active citizens of the North Lawndale community. The program serves out-of-school youth between the ages of 17 and 21. Participants must have verbal skills at a minimum 7.0 grade level and math skills at a minimum 7.0 grade level.



The program runs for 12 weeks and is divided between eight weeks of job training and four weeks in a paid internship. During the eight weeks of training students learn important life skills, job readiness skills, and basic computer skills through an introduction to Microsoft Office. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on communications and customer service skills throughout the program.

Upon successful completion of the *Building Beyond!* program, participants are prepared for the following positions:

- Customer Service Representative
- General Office Assistant
- Data Entry Specialist
- Telemarketer
- Bank Teller
- Sales Associate

After completing the training component, students begin paid internships at companies such as Verizon, Sears, LaSalle Bank, Bank One, Kinkos and Starbucks. The pre-employment training, career education and internships help youth integrate into the workforce and prepare them to start careers of their own.

Building Beyond! also includes mentoring and leadership components, along with career and education trips. Additional supportive services offered include transportation passes to attend the class, a savings plan and referrals for clothing, food, and shelter. Please direct all questions and referrals to the *Building Beyond!* Program Manager, Alona Lerman, at 773-542-2000 x 3635 or leral@sina.org.

Cook Central's Family to Family builds neighborhood resources

Now after receiving a decision on the region's reorganization, Family to Family, is continuing its rollout in Cook Central. This initiative from the Annie E. Casey Foundation is committed to improving results for children and families involved in the child welfare system. Cook Central's Local Area Network (LAN) 67 is one of three pilot sites, along with Peoria and Rock Island. In LAN 67, the largest LAN in the state, Family to Family will focus on the communities of Hermosa, Logan Square, Avondale, West Town and Humboldt Park.



Jeanette Hamilton and Teddy Spinelli make plans for an upcoming event with Cook Central families. The team works with staff in the field to support the Family to Family pilot sites.

The goals of this program are to:

- Develop a network of family foster care that is neighborhood based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in communities in which children currently live.
- Ensure that all children who come into foster care, including teens and sibling groups, are routinely placed with families.
- Increase the number and quality of foster and kinship families to meet projected needs.
- Provide the services birth families and children need in a timely-enough manner that they can be safely reunited as soon as possible.
- Screen children being considered for removal from home to determine what help their family needs to keep them safe, to make the help available when it is most needed, and to better support the children who must be placed outside of home.
- Involve birth parents, foster parents, and kinship families as team members with our agency and one another.
- Become a neighborhood resource for children and families by investing in the capacity of communities where large numbers of families involved in the child welfare system live.

All of the goals listed above are practices that DCFS is already in the process of implementing with families. The greater Humboldt Park community was chosen based on the statistics provided by the Division of Child Protection on cases reported to

the Hotline for investigation. Additionally, the area experienced a high level of children coming into care and being placed outside of their community of origin. The Family to Family initiative hopes to reduce those numbers.

Cook Central will invite foster parents in the communities named above to upcoming events where they can learn more about the Family to Family initiative and become active participants in the core strategies. Simply having more foster families in the child's home community benefits children, their birth families and the foster parents. But the importance of foster parents goes even deeper.

"Foster parents are critical to initiatives' recruitment, training and support objectives because foster parents can teach us what really works," said Teddy Spinelli, senior foster care advisor with Family to Family.

Also, by working together with birth families, foster parents can support reunification goals and build valuable mentoring relationships. Family to Family will be the framework to bring all these elements together starting in the pilot sites and then to other communities.

Scholarship Winners (con't.)

Rasheed Howard

Rasheed Howard graduated from Hyde Park Academy in Chicago, where he had a B+ grade point average. While in high school, Rasheed had been in the Chess Club, the National Honor Society, and on the soccer team. He has also served as a volunteer tutor and mentor. He now attends Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.



Shana Hunt

Shana Hunt, 18, of Chicago is a 2003 graduate of Julian High School. Shana was a member of the Ladies of Julian Sorority, the Honors Club, and the Senior Council. She was also an honor student in the Trio/Upward Bound Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She now attends Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, majoring in Communications.

Fatima Johnson

Fatima Johnson, of Chicago, attended South Shore Community Academy, where she maintained a G.P.A. of 3.66 on a 4.0 system. While in high school, Fatima was a member of the National Honor Society, the cross-country team, the marching band, and the Student Council. She has also been a peer mentor. In addition to all of this, Fatima writes poetry and was a semi-finalist in an international poetry contest. She now attends the University of Illinois where she will major in English/Pre-Law.

Taneva Jones

Taneva Jones is a graduate of Bloomtrail High School of Sauk Village, Illinois. She received a silver medal for a painting in a youth art contest. Taneva now attends Southern Illinois University in Carbondale majoring in Interior Design.



Octavia Lee

Octavia Lee, 18, of Chicago, now attends Western Illinois University, majoring in computer science. In high school, she was a National Honor Society member and was Treasurer of the Student Council at Simeon Career Academy. She has been a volunteer tutor for elementary students and was employed as a receptionist at Buford Law Office.

Vinh Luu

Vinh Luu is 18 years old and came to the United States from Vietnam at age 6 as a political refugee. He is a 2003 graduate from Niles North High School in Skokie. Vinh took a college preparatory curriculum throughout his entire high school career. He was also employed by Medical Express Ambulance Service in the Human Resources Department. Vinh now attends Western Illinois University majoring in Criminal Justice. His career goal is to become an FBI agent.

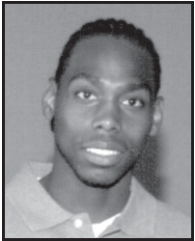


Keonna McAfee

Keonna McAfee, 18, of Chicago attends the University of Illinois. She plans to major in English and her career goal is to be a leading news broadcaster. In high school, Keonna was also a writer and editor for her school newspaper. She was the statistician and manager for the basketball team and a member of the Black Student Union.

LaJanice Page

LaJanice Page graduated from Jones College Preparatory High School in Chicago. She was on the honor roll with a G.P.A. of 3.66 on a 4.0 system. She also participated in indoor and outdoor track and field. She has been a loyal member of Mayor Daley's Book Club for four straight years. LaJanice now attends Chicago State University and plans to major in Nursing.



Corneal Rainge

Corneal Rainge, 18, of Chicago graduated from Amundsen High School where he maintained a G.P.A. of 3.5 on a 4.0 system and achieved perfect attendance from 2001 – 2002. He was also named

the Most Improved Student in June 2002. He was on the basketball team, track team, and a member of the African-American Club. Corneal now attends Northern Illinois University, majoring in engineering.



Herald Watson

Herald Watson, 18, of Chicago, graduated from Perspective Charter School with an overall G.P.A. of 2.97 on a 4.0-point system. In high school, he was also a scholar athlete excelling and

receiving numerous awards for basketball and academics. He now attends the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Herald has dreams and aspirations of becoming an engineer and entrepreneur.

Kiara Ramos

Kiara Ramos, 18, of Chicago is a graduate of Mather High School. She was the captain of the bowling team and helped them win the conference championship trophy. Some of her other high school activities included softball and the Aspira Club. She attends Northern Illinois University and will major in Computer Science.



Shalonda Williamson

Shalonda Williamson, 18, of Chicago, graduated ranked 9 out of a class of 306 at Dunbar High School. In high school, she was a volunteer in the counselor's office and a member of the National Honor Society and Principal's Scholar's Club. Shalonda attends Chicago State University and plans to major in Computer Engineering.



LaShawn Wallace

LaShawn Wallace, 18, of Chicago, graduated from Prosser Career Academy ranked 42 out of a class of 283. LaShawn received numerous honors such as Mayor Daley Student of the Year, National

Honor Roll, and Principal Scholars. In addition, she participated in a variety of extra-curricular activities, including serving as President of Mayor Daley's Book Club, International Culture Society, African-American Club, ROTC, Drum & Bugle Corps, basketball, cheerleading, and the Chess Club. She now attends Northern Illinois University and is majoring in business.

Cook County Advocate

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Call with foster parent association news and schedules of local training, features on foster families and community members working for children, photos and news articles and supports all foster families can use.

Cook County Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Trainings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

Module 1 - *The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children* (Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

Module 2 - *Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 3 - *Child Development* - New module being written

Module 4 - *Child Sexual Development and Sexual Abuse* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 5 - *Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 6 - *Working as a Professional Team Member* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 7 - *Promoting Children's Personal & Cultural Identity* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 8 - *Promoting Permanency Outcomes* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 9 - *Managing the Fostering Experience* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 10 - *Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families* (Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

COOK NORTH

For the Fall training schedule,
please contact Harold
Washington College at
312-553-5821.

COOK CENTRAL

Module

Circle Family Care

Dec. 6, 13 & 20 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 5

COOK SOUTH

Module

DCFS South Area Office

Nov. 15 (Sat) & Nov. 22 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 2

Module

DCFS South Area Office

Dec. 6 (Sat) & Dec. 13 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 4

DCFS Harvey Office

Dec. 13 & 20 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 1

Dec. 9, 11 & 16 (Tue/Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 2

African-American Images

Dec. 2, 4 & 9 (Tue/Thu) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 8

Dec. 16 & 18 (Tue/Wed) 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. 9

Dec. 6, 13 & Dec. 20 (Sat) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 10

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Nov. 11 & 12 (Tue/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

COOK NORTH

Irish Center

Nov. 1. (Sat) 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Dec. 1 & 3 (Mon/Wed) 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Operation ABLE

Dec. 11 & 16 (Tue/Thu) 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

COOK CENTRAL

Association House (Spanish)

Dec. 13 (Sat) 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Sequin Services

Nov. 19 & 24 (Wed/Mon) 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

COOK SOUTH

DCFS South Area Office

Nov. 1 (Sat) 9:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Nov. 19 & 24 (Wed/Mon) 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Dec. 20 (Sat) 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Nov. 10 & 12 (Mon/Wed) 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Youth Empire

Dec. 13 (Sat.) 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

DCFS Harvey Area Office

Nov. 6 & 13 (Thu) 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Dec. 10 & 15 (Wed/Mon) 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Illinois Mentor

Nov. 22 (Sat) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Church of the Holy Family

Nov. 18 & 20 (Tue/Thu) 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Other Inservice Training

COOK SOUTH

Power of Play

(One 6 hour session = 6 training hours)

DCFS South Area Office

Nov. 8 (Sat) 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

All classes are
coordinated by
Harold Washington
College in Chicago.

Call 312-553-5821
or -3031 to register.